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Tim Cowie

Game Recap: Men's Basketball | 1/28/2016 11:33:00 PM | Marc Gignac

## Hot-Shooting Little Rock Downs Men's Basketball 80-67

*The Eagles cap a four-game road trip at Arkansas State Saturday.*

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** – Marcus Johnson Jr. scored 24 points, and Little Rock canned 13 3-pointers as a team to down Georgia Southern 80-67 in Sun Belt Conference men's basketball action Thursday night in the Jack Stephens Center.

Tookie Brown netted 17 points and corralled six rebounds to lead Georgia Southern (7-12, 3-6), while Mike Hughes tallied 16 points, seven rebounds and two assists. Ike Smith scored nine points, and Shawn O'Connell posted eight points and six rebounds. Johnson Jr. hit seven triples for the Trojans (18-2, 8-1), and Roger Woods scored 15 points. Josh Hagins finished with 10 points, six rebounds and six assists, and Mareik Isom scored 10.

Little Rock shot 51 percent from the field and 59 percent from 3-point range. Georgia Southern shot 44 percent from the field but made just 5 of 25 from behind the arc.

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### **The story**

Little Rock made nine of its first 13 shots, including four 3-pointers, to build a 27-14 advantage with 7:51 left in the first half. The margin grew to 16 points when Johnson Jr. hit a 3-pointer, was fouled and made the free throw. Brown answered with a conventional 3-point play, and Georgia Southern trailed 41-28 at halftime. Turnovers plagued the Eagles as they committed eight in the period, and Little Rock turned them into eight points.

Georgia Southern knocked down five of its first eight shots in the second half, and an O'Connell fast-break layup cut the margin to 46-40 early in the frame. The Trojans pushed the lead back into double digits as the Eagles went cold from the field, missing 10 straight at one point, and a Johnson Jr. triple made the score 67-52 midway through the period. Georgia Southern cut the lead to nine points on a Hughes driving layup with 1:44 left, and the Eagles got a defensive stop but Allsmiller's 3-point try from the wing was off the mark. Georgia Southern was forced to foul, and Little Rock went 4 for 4 from the charity stripe to seal the win.

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### **Quotable from Coach [Mark Byington](#)**

"They are a good team, and when you combine the way they play defense with the way they shot the ball tonight, it's going to be tough. I thought we had some lapses with our scouting report and attention to detail early, and we had trouble locating shooters, which allowed them to get going."

"The challenge heading into this game is that we didn't get a lot of prep time with the travel this week. Knowing how good they were, I felt like we needed some practice time. We tried to do the best we could and balance that with the need for rest, and our legs shot the ball tonight like a tired team. You add that to a good defensive team, and not many of them are going in. To make it simple, the game was won at the 3-point line."

"I thought we took great shots in the second half, and we had our opportunities but the shots didn't go down. Jake had some he normally makes, and Ike had some he normally makes. I liked a lot of things we did tonight, but we weren't as focused defensively and had some assignment misses that led to some things that put us down in a hole."